VZCZCXRO9163
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHGI RUEHJS RUEHKUK RUEHLH
RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHAM #2487/01 3201316
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 161316Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6269
INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHDOI/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 AMMAN 002487

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/P BEHRMAN
STATE ALSO FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/RA, AND OES/STC
STATE PASS TO NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
STATE ALSO PASS TO NIH/INTERNATIONAL
STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/RAMAMURTHY AND URIZAR, OSTP/RAO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: TSPL SENV PREL EAID PINR JO
SUBJECT: SIGNIFICANT ESTH OPPORTUNITIES IN JORDAN TO ADVANCE POTUS' CAIRO VISION

REF: A. Amman 2404
¶B. Amman 2302
¶C. Amman 1880
¶D. Amman 1676
¶E. State 71325

(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A robust bilateral and regional ESTH partnership with Jordan is evidenced through 18 USG agencies engaging in ESTH collaborations over the past several years. Despite the individual merits of each activity, the collective impact of this engagement in supporting Jordan's science and technology (S&T) capacity and in kick-starting the R&D-Innovation-Commercialization cycle critical to employment generation and economic development remains limited. A number of structural and resource impediments in Jordan's S&T establishment suggest the need to elevate any new ambitious USG S&T initiatives to Jordan's political leadership to ensure buy-in and support. In addition to the many ongoing ESTH programs in Jordan, there is significant ESTH-related opportunity to support the President's Cairo vision - with additional resources and USG commitment - and to have a transformational impact in implementing and extending the deliverables outlined in the speech. End Summary.

¶2. (U) A five member delegation led by NSC Senior Director for Global Engagement Pradeep Ramamurthy, with participation from S/P, NEA/PI, and R/PPR, visited Jordan from October 6-9 to follow-up on the initiatives outlined in the President's June 4 speech in Cairo. Their Amman meetings included briefings on bilateral and regional ESTH issues with the Embassy ESTH Hub, a meeting at the El Hassan Science City, and a lunch with seven entrepreneurs from the energy, water, and environment sectors. This report provides an update on some recent USG S&T engagement in Jordan as well as additional ideas on implementing the President's Cairo vision in the ESTH arena.

Strong Bilateral ESTH Cooperation

¶3. (U) As many as 18 USG agencies have had some form of ESTH collaborations over the past two years in Jordan. Without fail, every month brings some joint activities. In just the last 20 days, there have been three well received activities supporting the U.S.-Jordan S&T Agreement:

-- A Technology Transfer and Innovation workshop held at the El Hassan Science City supported by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the Department of State. Technology transfer experts from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the University of California, and Florida State University engaged with academia, government, and the private sector on fostering innovation and setting up technology transfer offices in Jordan;

-- A USAID sponsored workshop on strengthening proposal writing skills and supporting commercialization for Jordanian scientists; and

-- A Department of Energy workshop to support the development of standards for "green building material envelopes."

¶4. (U) The USG continues to fund a variety of joint research activities under the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) program for Arab-Israeli cooperation; several Jordanian institutions participate in collaborative research with U.S. counterparts through NIH and NSF grants; and there is continuing cooperation on a variety of projects in the water, environment, and renewable energy sectors - all areas highlighted in the POTUS speech. Fortunately, there are also many U.S.-Jordan S&T collaborations that do not include the USG - between the private sector and academia - testament to the strong bilateral momentum on scientific collaborations.

But - Limited S&T Impacts

¶5. (SBU) Despite the strong bilateral collaboration, and the individual merits of each activity, the collective impact in helping Jordan's S&T capacity and kick-starting the

R&D-Innovation-Commercialization circle, which is critical to employment generation and economic development, remains limited. There are many impediments to increasing S&T resources in Jordan and to getting more "bang for the buck" from whatever little is available. These include: scarce R&D resources (Jordan currently allocates about 0.35 percent of GDP to S&T); lack of a science policy framework to manage and prioritize science in the country; weak S&T institutions with frequent turn-over (there have been three Secretary Generals in the last two years at the Higher Council for Science and Technology); internal turf battles within the S&T community; little appreciation for intellectual property rights; a propensity to spend money on "tangible" real estate projects versus S&T and "knowledge;" a brain-drain of scientists towards greener pastures in the West and the Gulf; and, perhaps most importantly, a lack of a social contract between the scientist-inventor and society.

Follow-Up to the President's Cairo Speech

¶6. (SBU) There is significant ESTH opportunity to boost our S&T collaboration and implement the vision of the President's Cairo speech. Given the issues outlined in Para 5, any ambitious initiative to support the POTUS vision, and have a lasting transformational impact, should elevate S&T issues beyond our current primarily technical and operational level interlocutors to strategic planners, including the Royal Court. This would help Jordan's S&T community get increased traction and resources within their own Government, academic, and private sector establishments.

¶7. (SBU) Jordan could play a key role in the implementation of the Amman ESTH Hub proposed Arab American Science Partnership (AASP) (refs A and C). This lead role could be reflected in a variety of methodologies if funding support is available for the AASP or a similarly ambitious S&T framework:

-- Requesting Jordan's political leadership to help convene a regional science policy forum at the Undersecretary or Ministerial level to support a critical science policy dialogue in the Arab region, while also providing the USG with a forum to unveil any new S&T initiatives;

-- Supporting the El Hassan Science City or the Jordan University of Science and Technology in the establishment of a joint center of excellence - in the fields of water, environment/climate change research, or renewable energy - with U.S. private sector participation;

-- Requesting the GOJ to provide co-funding support through its recently established Scientific Research Fund with any USG initiated science fund. Another variant of a co-funding approach could be to jointly allocate some resources to the U.S.-Jordan Science and Technology agreement.

-- Partnering with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature and several other environmental NGOs in selecting Jordanian youth to implement the AASP Green Ambassadors program.

-- Partnering with eight to ten of the Jordanian public universities in creating a "Junior Scientists Network" to join the National Academies of Science supported Frontiers of Science Program;

-- Supporting several of the entrepreneurs who met with the visiting NSC delegation to undertake internal outreach and mentoring roles, and also share Jordanian experiences at the planned White House summit on entrepreneurship;

-- Working with USAID/Jordan to implement additional S&T focused programming - focused on energy/water/environment; and,

-- Expanding the Multilateral Water Working Group related (EXACT) cooperative activities from traditional training or joint projects, to include joint research among the core parties (an example: joint identification of groundwater recharge sites in the region using GIS technologies).

¶8. (U) As discussed with NSC Ramamurthy, Amman ESTH Hub is glad to support the White House Office of Science Technology and Policy and provide input to a S&T Needs Assessment paper through a short TDY in Washington. Embassy Amman will also continue to publish its regular ESTH Hub activity reports with regional ESTH developments which were highlighted as a "global best practice" by the NSC.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at
http://www.state.gov.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/

BEECROFT